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UNCLAS RANGOON 000298

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR S/ES-CR, S/ES-O, EAP/BCLTV

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC PGOV BM NLD

SUBJECT: NLD LEADERS CHEERED BY SECRETARY'S BURMA COMMENTS

¶1. (SBU) The free members of the National League for Democracy's (NLD) Central Executive Committee (CEC) were very pleased that Secretary Powell had mentioned Burma's democracy struggle during his March 2nd speech to the Heritage Foundation. NLD leader, and Nobel Peace Laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi and three other senior NLD leaders have been in prison and/or house arrest since May 2003. The CEC thanked the Secretary for his statement and asked emboffs during a March 4th meeting (septel) to pass on that the NLD members had "heard Secretary Powell's remarks and were encouraged by them." They promised that the NLD would "carry on the fight" and urged the Secretary to continue raising at all opportunities the importance of real democratic transition in Burma.

Martinez